

I yield back all time and ask that we proceed to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Ms. STABENOW. I withdraw my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

COVID VACCINES

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I am proud to share with all of you the experience of California this last year in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to say that California has led the way on COVID-19 prevention and vaccine because we have seen the devastation that surging cases can cause.

Last winter—remember where we were last winter? A catastrophic surge in my home county of Los Angeles overwhelmed local hospitals, as was the case, frankly, in many parts of the country. Families were desperate to find care for their loved ones. Ambulances struggled to find hospitals with capacity.

As we approach this winter season, I recognize that we made incredible progress turning the tide since those tragic times. Now, just a month ago, California achieved the lowest level of COVID-19 transmission of any State in the Nation, but today cases are beginning to rise again. We are seeing the effects of the changing weather.

We need to stay vigilant to prevent another devastating surge like the wave that peaked in California and across the country last winter.

Fortunately, today, we are armed with a powerful defense: an FDA-approved vaccine that is safe, that is effective, and that is free for all. California's historic vaccination effort—made possible by the resources that we helped deliver when we passed the American Rescue Plan—has covered more than three-quarters of our residents, more than 55 million shots in arms of Californians.

But now is not the time to let up. Every person who gets the vaccine helps to stop spread of the virus in our community. And we just received two new critical weapons: One, booster shots to increase protections for adults and, two, approval of a vaccine for children older than 5.

Colleagues, during last week's State work period, I had the privilege of joining leaders of the Los Angeles Unified School District for the opening of their first vaccine clinic, a mobile clinic on school sites for students ages 5 and up. I saw firsthand the anxious excitement of families looking forward to a freer, safer life for children. Imagine that, play dates with friends, holiday celebrations with grandparents, and relief for those with family members at higher risk.

Now, as parents of younger children, Angela and I know that this pandemic has especially been hard on children. For more than a year, as we would

gather together to pray as a family, our youngest, Diego, whom many of you met, would ask God for COVID to be over. And he would then ask when a vaccine would be ready for him and his brothers.

That is why it was such a big deal when the vaccine was approved for children ages 5 and older. Angela and I were vaccinated earlier this year. Our oldest son, Roman, was vaccinated months ago. And, finally, last week, Diego and Alex received their vaccines. So we know that we are sharing this moment of joy with millions of families across the country who are relieved that our children will be better protected against COVID-19.

Colleagues, as we approach this now second Thanksgiving since the start of the pandemic, we recognize that we have much to be thankful for. We are thankful for the scientists who drew on years of research to design and test one of the most effective vaccines that we have ever seen. We are thankful for the doctors and nurses who are helping to administer the vaccine to as many people as possible while caring for the sick. And we continue to be thankful for all the essential workers who take on high-risk jobs to keep food on our tables and keep the economy going.

So it is in the spirit of all this that I ask each and every one of you to do your part. To everyone at home, please, each and every one of you do your part. Protect yourself. Protect your family. Protect your community. Get vaccinated. Get your children vaccinated. Go check to see if you are eligible for a booster, and if you are, find one near you at vaccines.gov. We have come to appreciate how vaccination is the key to a safe holiday season, and it is key to ending the pandemic for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

VOTE ON BONNIE NOMINATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was scheduled to start at 2:30 begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bonnie nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HAS-SAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 469 Ex.]

YEAS—76

Baldwin	Graham	Portman
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Heinrich	Risch
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blunt	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Hoeven	Rounds
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Brown	Johnson	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Shelby
Capito	Kennedy	Sinema
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Lujan	Thune
Coons	Manchin	Tillis
Cornyn	Marshall	Toomey
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Van Hollen
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wicker
Ernst	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Ossoff	Young
Fischer	Padilla	
Gillibrand	Peters	

NAYS—19

Barrasso	Hawley	Sasse
Braun	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lummis	Sullivan
Cramer	Murkowski	Tuberville
Cruz	Paul	
Hagerty	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—5

Hassan	Markey	Warren
Inhofe	Shaheen	

The nomination was confirmed.
(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA).

Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Illinois.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Nelson nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Brian Eddie Nelson, of California, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK LEAHY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the desk behind me is empty at this moment, but whenever anything important is taking place on the floor, you will find seated there the dean of the U.S. Senate, Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont.

This week, he surprised a number of us by announcing his retirement at the end of next year.

I have come to know PAT during my service in the Senate. He is a humanitarian. He is a gifted lawmaker and a

passionate defender of America's national ideals and, I might add, of international human rights. Loretta and I count PATRICK and his wonderful wife Marcelle as really good friends.

I have been on the Senate Judiciary Committee, chairing it for a year. I have more insight into that job than I ever had before, and I have certainly realized that when Senator LEAHY was the chair of that committee, he wrote an extraordinary record, which many of us only dream of emulating.

I thank him for his passionate, consistent, faithful support of the DREAM Act, which I introduced 20 years ago, and his efforts to help me get this enacted into law. I also appreciated when he gave me the opportunity to create a new subcommittee in Judiciary entitled the "Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law," which I chaired. We did good things for America and the world.

PAT LEAHY is known throughout the world, and I mean that literally, as a defender of human rights and human dignity. I have seen it so many times.

He and I decided to join forces a few years ago on behalf of a political prisoner. Her name is Leila de Lima. She is a human rights advocate and a senator in the Philippines. She is in jail.

Two years ago, Senator LEAHY passed an amendment on her behalf in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. As a result, strongman Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines banned both Senator LEAHY and myself from entering the Philippines because of our action. I can tell you that we take great pride in being singled out in that manner. Duterte knew, as we all know, that when PATRICK LEAHY sees injustice, he will use his power in office to put things right.

His service in the Senate has been a great benefit to our Nation, our world, and his beloved State of Vermont, and we will certainly miss him when he retires. I will just add, though, watch closely because he is going to run through the tape. He has a little over a year left in the Senate, and I am sure he will work for that entire period of time for the betterment of this Nation and his beautiful Vermont.

REMEMBERING MAX CLELAND

Madam President, over the weekend, I reflected on an event in my life that occurred 58 years ago.

On November 24, 1963, I had just transferred and was a sophomore at Georgetown University. It was a chilly, gray Sunday morning, and I had joined a huge crowd of thousands of people in Lafayette Square, across the street from the White House, to stand in mournful silence.

A few minutes after 1 o'clock that afternoon, the doors of the White House opened, and the flag-draped casket of President John F. Kennedy was carried out. The casket was placed on a caisson for a solemn procession to this U.S. Capitol. The route was lined with hundreds of thousands of mourners

standing 10, 12 deep. Hardly anyone spoke. The only sounds were the clacking of horses' hooves, the sound of metal wheels on the pavement, and the muffled sounds and drums of the military escort.

More than 30 years later, I recounted that student experience to a colleague in the U.S. Senate. His name was Max Cleland from the State of Georgia, and he said to me: "Durbin, I was standing in the same corner in Lafayette Square that you were standing in." He was there for the same reason I was: to witness history and to pay homage to our fallen President.

There we were, just a few feet away from one another in Lafayette Square, but our lives took a much different course immediately after that.

I went to law school, married, and started a family, and my wife and I were blessed with three kids.

Max Cleland enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1965 after graduating from college. Military service was a long tradition in his family. He spent 2 years in what he called a "cushy" job as an Army aide, and he hated it. He fought to be sent to Vietnam.

In April 1968, with less than a month left in his tour of duty, Army CPT Max Cleland found himself at the Battle of Khe Sanh, one of the longest and deadliest battles in the Vietnam war.

On April 8, 1968, he jumped off of a helicopter and saw a hand grenade on the ground. He thought it had fallen off his flak jacket. As he reached to pick it up, the grenade exploded, tearing off his right arm and both of his legs. He was 25 years old.

When he was recovering at Walter Reed, a friend took his doctor aside and asked him in confidence: What sort of life awaits this triple amputee? What would he be able to do?

The doctor said that if Max ever recovered enough just to put on his own shirt, that simple task would exhaust him for the rest of the day. Well, that doctor didn't understand his patient. He didn't know Max Cleland. He saw what that grenade blast had taken away from him, but he didn't see the deep reservoirs of faith, strength, and determination that remained in Max and grew stronger over time.

Before his injury, Max Cleland was the golden boy of his hometown of Lithonia, GA. He was his parents' only child. He stood 6 feet 2 inches, was a basketball and tennis player in high school, and was voted the "most exceptional student" during his senior year. He could have done anything with his life, but during that internship semester in Washington in 1963, Max Cleland decided he wanted to be a U.S. Senator. Nothing could kill that dream—not even the terrible explosion at Khe Sanh that took three of his limbs and nearly took his life.

After 8 months in VA hospitals and rehab centers, he went home to Georgia. In 1970, at the age of 28, he became the youngest person ever elected to the Georgia State Senate. In 1984, he be-

came the youngest person to head up the U.S. Veterans' Administration, now the Department of Veterans Affairs. It was under his watch that the VA first admitted the existence of something called post-traumatic stress disorder. Max knew the hell of post-traumatic stress well. He fought for treatment and compensation for our vets, and he struggled with visible and invisible wounds of war.

In 1982, Max Cleland was elected Georgia secretary of state, a position he held for 14 years. During that time, he gathered some of the biggest vote totals in Georgia history.

When Georgia Senator Sam Nunn decided to retire in 1996, Max knew it was his chance. He threw his hat in the ring and was elected U.S. Senator of Georgia.

We came to this Senate together in 1997. When Max came to the Senate, there was no ramp for wheelchair users in the Senate. He had to make his first speech from the back of the Chamber. He tucked a quote from the Book of Isaiah inside his breast pocket. It was simple: "Do not be afraid." He joined the Armed Services Committee and expanded education benefits for all veterans through the GI bill.

He was just full of energy and good cheer. I remember that warm smile and his big belly laughs. His optimism was a choice, and it required a grueling regimen to maintain it. He took 3 hours every morning to prepare himself physically and mentally to face each day. I remember reading an article in the Washington Post about a regimen of strenuous physical exercise, which he designed for himself. He had taken a spare bedroom in his apartment and did his own workout routine—this triple amputee—each morning.

For years, Max felt a sort of shame about his injuries. He felt the wounds were his own fault. He always thought that he had dropped the hand grenade that nearly killed him. It took 30 years for the truth to come out.

Max was telling this story on national TV when a man called in afterwards and said: I need to talk to Senator Cleland. He said to him: "Max, that's not how it happened at all. I know. I was there." He said another soldier had dropped the grenade, a "newbie" who hadn't taken the precautions that veteran soldiers know to take to prevent an accidental detonation.

The story turned out to be true, and after 30 years, Max could begin to forgive himself.

Max was serving in the Senate on 9/11. Months later, the Senate was debating how to merge several Agencies, offices, and Departments into the brandnew Department of Homeland Security. It was the biggest reorganization of the Federal Government since World War II, and it would create one of the largest Federal Agencies.

Some saw it as an opportunity to take on the unions. Max and I and many others thought otherwise. We